RAIN-MAKING

Little information is available on the processes of rain-making among the Luo. Roscoe states that it is an important ceremony and is performed by a *musoga* priests who lives among the people for this purpose.(1) According to Northcote, the rain-maker is greatly esteemed, and his homestead is usually found near a big tree which is considered sacred. When rain is wanted, he gathers some herbs, puts them in a large pot of water and boils them under the tree. He draws off a little into another pot and, sucking it up through a reed, squirts it into the air, after first blowing through the reed and making the pot bubble.(2) Evans-Pritchard mentions that the Luo rain-maker is called the *mon koth* and that sometimes his functions are combined with those of the *jabilo*. Rain-makers among the neighbouring Bantu seem to have a higher reputation than Luo *jakoth* and are often consulted.

WITCHCRAFT

Sickness is thought to be due either to the malevolence of a ghost or, more frequently, to magic worked by some envious person who wishes to bring misfortune on his victim.(3) In either case the aid of a witchdoctor is sought and he, by means of various incantations, discovers the cause and the culprit. A sorcerer may cause death by spearing the shadow of his victim, by working spells, by hiding certain objects near the house which bring sickness to the inmates. If a ghost is causing trouble the witch-doctor prescribes offerings and sacrifices necessary for appeasement. He also discovers thieves, conducts ordeals and divines the causes of events. He makes counter-magic to defend people against the activities of sorcerers and is the general prescriber of all cures. Johnston mentions a 'deeper magic' (*jambingo*) which, among the Gesi tribe is practised by the blacksmiths.(4)

LIFE CYCLE

BIRTH

After the birth of a boy the mother stays inside the house for four days; for a girl, she stays inside for three days. The father of the child does not eat or sleep in the hut until the child begins to cut its teeth.

Twins are considered lucky; their arrival is attended by many ceremonies and by propitiatory dances.

PUBERTY

Until marriage, girls help their mothers in the fields and assist them in cooking and carrying. Boys help in herding the animals. At puberty both boys and girls have their front lower teeth extracted and for four days they remain in their homes. After this period they go about visiting

(1) Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, p.292.
(2) Northcote, *J.R.A.I.*, 1907, p.64. (3) *Ibid.*
(4) *The Uganda Protectorate*, Vol.II, 1902.

4: Hobley G-5 (ca. 1900) 1902 FL11 Luo FL11

Games.—They play a kind of *bao* with sixteen holes; they put three small stones in each hole. The boys play a kind of hockey with a wooden ball.

Upon return from war about two out of every three cattle go to the *chief*; the *chief* then divides his share of the cattle with his brothers, and a man who has distinguished himself in war is given a reward of cattle by the *chief*. A man who distinguishes himself in war is also often given a wife without payment.

Food, etc.—They eat practically all meat except that of the hyæna. Some young men eat leopard meat to make them fierce in fighting; the meat of a serval cat is not eaten. The women do but eat fowls; some women do not eat sheep and eggs; some eat hippopotamus meat, some not; women do not drink milk, but eat it cooked with food. They have a curious custom of mixing cow's urine with the milk of the cow; the urine is allowed to stand a day or two to increase its flavour; they say it increases the amount of the butter and gives it a nice flavour, and it is moreover supposed to have a medicinal effect. The crested crane (*Balearica pilbericeps*) is never killed or eaten by these people.

Medicine, etc.—They pierce the chest until the lung is reached for chest complaints, and they even sometimes cut a small piece out of the lung through the aperture. They have medicine for wounds and for arrow poison, also for ulcers and for purging, but not for diarrhœa. They also have medicine to avert a threatened miscarriage. They profess to have a certain antidote for snake poison.* Venereal disease is practically unknown among the Ja-Luo.

Before going to war they often eat the outer seed case of a certain tree, and this is supposed to ensure their return unwounded; it is called *Odola*.

Peace ceremonies.—They kill a sheep and put part of it into a wooden mortar used for crushing grain, and the representative of each side takes out a piece and gives it to the opposite side. An old man from the side that is beaten will go to the village of the chief of the enemy and proceed to sweep up the cattle boma; this will be accepted as a sign of submission.

Killing animals for food.—They kill oxen by sticking a knife into the jugular vein; the head of the beast must be pointed to the west during the operation. Sheep and goats are killed the same way. Fowls are strangled.

Succession customs, etc.—When a man dies the property goes to the brother if the children are small; if the eldest son is grown up he takes the property and gives his brothers a share; but a son is not allowed to take the amount paid by anyone who marries one of his sisters; this amount all goes to the father's brother. The brother of the deceased takes the wives, but the eldest son will probably take the youngest wife of his deceased father.

* After considerable difficulty I obtained specimens of the plants said to be used as antidotes for snake poison, and Dr. Rendle, of the Botanical Department, British Museum, has kindly identified the plants for me. One plant, named *Phyteuma Abyssinica*, is used internally, an infusion being made from the leaves. The other plant, *Spermacoce pedunculata*, is used externally, a plaster of the macerated leaves being placed on the wound. I have not been able to discover the physiological action of these plants.

584 dispose of it as he pleased. On her return a feast was held—the *tero*
ayako—for her and her companions. Preparations for this feast were
made before her arrival, and the guests invited and the kind of enter-
tainment provided seems to have varied according to the family
circumstances. If the parents were poor only the girl's sisters and
the friends of her own age who had accompanied her were present;
porridge and milk were set before them, and the guests returned on
the same day to their own homes. But if the family was rich, older
relations and friends of both sexes were invited and were given meat
and beer. The quantity of beer required was often more than could
[343] be stored in the accustomed place, namely the hut belonging to the
girl's mother, and in this case a temporary shelter was built, known
as the *siwandhe*. It was constructed of reed mats between the
mother's hut and the hut next to it, and if the number of reed mats
available in the *dala* was insufficient, more were borrowed from the
neighbours. After the beer had been drunk the *siwandhe* hut was
dismantled and its component parts returned to their owners. The
[435 guests stayed two or even three days, and it was the convention that
252] before their departure a final meal of meat or of a kind of dried fish
called *kabaka* (an expensive dish that cost a goat to buy) should be
provided and cooked for them by the mother of the bride.

A sort of parallel to this feast known as *lupo* then took place in
the bridegroom's *dala*, a cow or a goat being sent to him by the bride's
parents to be killed and eaten by his brothers and sisters.

291 After the *tero ayako* and the *lupo* had taken place a bull known
584 as the *dho golo owimbo* was paid by the bridegroom, and with them
he sent a new *owimbo*, specially made for her, to the bride. She
then returned the *owimbo* lent to her by the bridegroom's sister, and
also took off the small *chiewo* and burnt it, being now entitled to wear
the big *chiewo* of the married woman. This was a bunch of aloe fibre
about ten inches long and thick enough to have a diameter of three or
four inches. It was tied tightly at the top like a tassel, and was worn
hanging from the small of the back, being attached to a string which
passed round the waist. This, and a six inch square apron of fibre
[778] string was all that a Luo woman wore, apart from her ornaments until
the advent of the Indian trader with his cotton piece goods at the
beginning of the century.*

[648] * Even now a woman who puts on a cotton dress when she leaves the *dala* sometimes reverts in the privacy of her home to the traditional raindance adorned only by the tassel and the fringe, and often the dress is put on over the tassel. This curious ornament has clearly a ritual if not a magical significance, of which I hope to obtain details later. I was informed that if a man touches, accidentally or purposely, the tassel of a married woman, he has to pay a fine of three goats to her husband. Moreover, when a woman loses her husband she discards her tassel of aloe fibre and replaces it by one of banana fibre, and this tassel
● [788] apparently has undefined properties. For if any man accepts her, she is likely to take it off and beat one of his cows with it, whereupon the cow is regarded as bewitched, and no one will buy it, or accept it in payment of a debt.

9: Owen M-5 (ca. 1920)1933 FL11 Luo FL11

FOOD PRODUCTION AND KINDRED MATTERS, AMONGST THE LUO.

By Archdeacon W. E. Owen.

(Paper read at the 3rd Annual Scientific Meeting held in Nov., 1933.)

Soil.:

134 The production of food must necessarily be associated with knowledge of the soil. The principal soil varieties have been named by the Luo, and the methods appropriate to each variety are well known. Black cotton soil, called " anywang," occurs over a wide area, mainly around the lake shores, and is conspicuous in the locations of Uyoma, Karachwonya, Kasigunga and the Kano Plains. Red earth, called " lwala," is, speaking generally, found further back from the lake, on the higher lands, and is to be found over wide tracts in Central and South Kavirondo, a notable location being North Gem, in Central Kavirondo. Sandy soil, called " kwoyo," is generally found in the neighbourhood of outcrops of granite, which is a prominent feature in many parts. The locations of Asembo in Central Kavirondo, and Suna in South Kavirondo are good examples of areas where this sandy soil is abundant. Murram, called " gu " when solid and " go " when disintegrated into a soil, occurs in places all over the country, Sakwa and Alego in particular providing many examples of it. Stony soil, called " kite," is to be found over large stretches, particularly in those neighbourhoods where escarpments rise from the regions round the lake. Though the labour involved in the cultivation of this stony soil is very great, where there is pressure of population, every available patch is made to produce food.

Rainfall:

132 Over certain sections of the country rainfall is very uncertain. The worst locations in this respect are lower Seme, Uyoma, Sakwa, Kadimo, parts of Asembo, Mirunda, Kasigunga and Rusinga. In other districts rainfall is abundant, running from forty to sixty five inches in the year, well distributed over the months, with the exception of January and early February. January is reckoned to be the driest [520] month of the year, and is the month when there is most relaxation from agricultural operations, this being the favourite time for the inter-clan wrestling matches.

● 781 782 776 Contrary to what many would expect, amongst people who periodically suffer from lack of rain, the Luo have developed no system of rain makers. At the top of Usenge Hill in Kadimo, there is still to be seen a site marked by a collection of votive pots, where the local

789 elders gathered to offer sacrifice and supplicate the local spirit,
782 together with the clan spirits, in times of great drought, but this is
776 entirely different from the rain-making cult. Even in this instance, it is doubtful whether the ceremony has not been influenced in large measure by the neighbouring Bantu peoples. The particular guardian spirit of this hill, is reputed to be a fabulously big snake, so enormous as to be able to encircle the hill with its body. Away from the Lake shore, which suffers most from uncertain rainfall, the Luo account very easily for the fact that they have no rain-makers. They simply say that they never have lack of rain, so why should they have rain-makers.

791 But though they have no rain-makers, they have a term for rain-maker, whom they call "Jajimb koth." When they need a rain-maker they employ either a Bantu from the Basiekwe clan of the Banyole, or one from Mudhiero, Yiro in Marama. And, of course, it is not alone for agriculture that rain is needed. The fishing in the rivers suffers greatly when the rivers run low, and fishermen not infrequently call in the aid of the rain-maker. On the lower reaches
[782] of the Nzoia River, there existed a custom now happily extinct, according to which human sacrifice was made to the spirit of the river. The unfortunate person to be sacrificed was a girl, generally a young one and ill-favoured, who was bound, and some accounts say stunned, before being cast into the river. Rain-makers still flourish, though shorn of much of their influence and tribute. Only a few years ago I was in Uyoma during a time of rain shortage. I happened to be collecting genealogies, and was visiting the old men for this purpose. The conversation turned on the lack of rain, and I asked had they sent for the rain-maker. I really did not expect that they would have done so, and was somewhat surprised to find that they had sent their offerings to one of the Bantu of the Basiekwe clan. It seemed a pity that they should waste their substance on what could do them no
[609] earthly good, so I spent some time trying to convince them that the rain-maker had no power to bring rain. They listened very politely, but at the end of it were "of the same opinion still." I left them gently poking fun at them for being so credulous. I was about a mile or less from my camp, and during my walk home, suddenly, from nowhere, clouds rushed up, a violent rain storm pelted down and I got thoroughly drenched. I would have given a good deal to have been able to listen to the comments of those who had heard so politely my well-meant arguments. Incidents somewhat like this are, no doubt, responsible for the deep seated faith in the rain-makers' powers. It did not convince me.

241 The preparation of the soil for the seed was, and is, performed
791 without any ceremony of invocation preceding it, except when the land had been taken in conquest from enemies. In the latter case the

241 Besides weeding, there is much to be done to protect the crop.
[789] Hail storms do a lot of damage at times, and to protect the crops a
" medicine " is employed called ' migalo magalo pe." This consists
of herbs tied in a bunch to the top of a pole about 6—8 feet high,
which is stuck in the middle of the field. (Herdsmen too, use this
[231] to keep themselves dry while out with the cattle, and I have seen a
herdsman accompanying the cows with these herbs tied to the top
[674] of his spear.) Except in time of famine, stealing from the crop is
unknown, which contrasts favourably with complaints made from time
to time that Natives steal maize and coffee from European farms.
In their own community such an offence is practically unknown. But
241 four-legged depredators are a serious problem in certain localities.
417 Fields are enclosed in fences of the branches of thorn trees, laid on
136 the ground, and these do give a certain protection against wild pigs,
monkeys and baboons. But they are of no use against hippo and
elephant. To protect crops, mainly sweet potato, against the hippo
it is the practice to erect a small temporary hut, which is occupied at
night by a guard armed with a couple of spears. It must be a weary
business, for the potatoes are cultivated close to the lake edge where
mosquitoes swarm, so between the hippo and the mosquitoes the guard
[224] must have a trying time. In old days before the Game laws came in,
organized hunts were held, which were very successful.

241 The most difficult animal is, of course, the elephant. These have
disappeared from Central Kavirondo but still infest districts like
136 Mirunda and Sakwa in South Kavirondo. They can do heavy damage
both to millet and sweet potato. The beating of pots and pans is tried
to scare away the elephant, while occasionally the more daring venture
forth from the hut to throw stones or otherwise drive away the beasts.
This is an operation attended with peril in the dark of the night, and
occasionally lives are lost in this way. Lives too are lost through
guards mistaking their fellow guards for wild animals. Jok, one of
the most famous of ancestors of the Luo, is said to have lost his life
in this way. The story is that before going off to drink beer, he
told his sons to go on guard in the field that night. They refused to
his face, but when he had gone thought better of it, and went on
guard. He returned from the beer drink, and went to see what was
happening in the field, believing that there was no guard. His sons
mistook his footsteps for that of a pig, and speared him with fatal
results. Similar things still occur from time to time.

241 Birds, especially weaver birds, are a pest as the grain crop
ripens. Scarecrows are employed, both mechanical and human. Of
136 the former an inverted cooking pot on the top of a short pole is a
857 common device. Boys are employed in large numbers when the birds
are most troublesome, and their harsh cries are quite a part of the

241 life of the countryside. Ofttimes the boys are armed with slings from
136 which stones are projected at random into the midst of the crop, or
857 into the midst of a flock of birds as they rise. One of the reasons why the Luo denude the land of trees is because they give harbourage to their bird enemies.

241 They are wise to insect pests also, and have a greater belief in
136 their remedies than many a farmer has in the aids supplied by our civilization. The medicine is called by two names, " yadh miri " or
789 " yadh lisese." It is employed against a small red and black beetle, called by the Luo " Nyanginja " which eats the flower of the millet, thus preventing a crop. The medicine man who prepares it must be a man of peaceable disposition and character, not a quarreller or disputer with his neighbours. The whole success of the medicine depends on the absence of disputation and quarrelling, and of the grosser forms of vice, like adultery. No adulterer may be supplied
[837] with the medicine, for his very handling of it would nullify its usefulness, not only for himself, but also for his neighbours. All must be peace in the community until the harvest is reaped. Unlike other medicines, which are tied to a pole and left to work their influence, " yadh miri " is made into a decoction, which is sprinkled over the growing crop at eventide. I have seen the operation at a place called Maranda in Sakwa, Central Kavirondo. It was then being used against maize borer. At a time when this pest was giving a good deal of trouble to European farmers, I heard a man who was back in the Reserve on leave from a farm in the Kitale district, pour scorn on the methods used by Europeans with various sprays. He was by way of being one of the more progressive men, but he had nothing but absolute faith in the efficacy of " yadh miri."

578 Crops damaged by domestic stock gave rise to many an angry
685 passion. The owner of the crop had liberty to chastise personally the herdboy (or man) through whose carelessness the stock were left untended. If the herd were a lad he could be cuffed and thumped without being able to proceed against the assailant. Nor did the father protest, provided the chastisement were in reason, for he knew that his son had rendered him liable to a claim for compensation. As likely as not he would add his own quota to the punishment already meted out. If the owner feared that he would get the worst of it in a personal encounter with a herdsman, then he had his remedy at law.

241 When the crop is ready for harvesting it is the duty of the men to do the reaping. In the case of millet, this is a laborious business, calling for judgment, for not all the heads would be ripe, and some must be left to ripen after the bulk has been reaped. It is the task
[462 of the women and children to pack the crop into the grain baskets
857] and carry it to the grain stores. In the case of millet it is quite

584 the negotiations, which is partaken of in a hut, not outside. To this feast three or four friends of each side are invited as witnesses. When the beer drinking stage has been reached, the company sit round the [273] beer pot in a circle, and the provider of the feast takes the long hollow beer-sucker, puts the end provided with a strainer in the pot, takes a few sucks, and then hands it across to the other party with the invitation to drink if he agrees to a matrimonial alliance between the two families taking place. If the second party desires at the last moment [675] to withdraw he declines to drink, but once having accepted the invitation and completed the contract by drinking, it is as irrevocable as a contract can be. The children thus pledged to marry may be so young that the marriage can not take place for years, or the girl may be a child, while the other may be a man already married. The girl so pledged in this way is known in some parts, as in Asembo, as " nyar oseke," " the girl of the beer sucker," and the Luo have no stronger matrimonial contract. It is hedged about with potent penalties, 584 mainly magical, in case of any breach of the contract by either of the ●789 parties pledged. But even this most binding of all binding contracts is not invariably kept. Occasionally a girl will not submit to the fate marked out for her, and if she can find a man brave enough to join his fortune with hers, they undergo a ceremony, the essential feature of which is the drinking of " medicine " called " manyasi." This is supposed to render harmless the evils which would otherwise befall them.

789 Women are by no means so helpless when bound to their husbands as many are inclined to believe. *In some ways* wives are in a stronger 593 position than are women in lands where magic is not believed in. Luo women have many weapons in their armoury, by which they can bring their husbands into subjection, or perhaps I ought to say, something like subjection. I cannot find that these weapons are resorted to frivolously. A woman has to be hard pushed to bring them into play. One of which we hear a good deal is a curse debarring cohabitation. It is very simple in operation. Striking her thigh with her open palm, the wife vows never to cohabit again. The striking of the thigh is essential. Once this is done dire penalties, sickness of himself and children, will result if the husband attempts to force consent. The fat is now truly in the fire, and the husband has to come to terms with his wife. When he has succeeded in mollifying her " manyasi," the medicine already mentioned, is drunk to break the curse. At this 241 stage of social development a belief in magic does serve the needs of 841 women in certain circumstances. She has powers in connection with agriculture which can be devastating. For instance, during her menses *no woman must sow seed. In the family of a polygamist lesser wives* dare not approach the " mikayi " or chief wife to share in the labour at this time. Such contact with the seed would prejudice the crop.

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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681 pay the fine, and from the amount the judge takes a portion for himself and passes the remainder to the successful litigant.

728 627 **Making peace between sections of the tribe.** Should there be a quarrel between two sections of the tribe and a desire be felt to end the strife, the chief of one section goes to the chief of the other with a few of his principal men, and they spend the afternoon and night together discussing the difficulty and finally coming to terms. The following day a goat is killed, some of the contents of the stomach are smeared over the chests of those present, and a little of the meat is pounded in a mortar and eaten as a sacred meal to ratify the terms of peace. As they eat the meal, they promise to live at peace, the form of oath taken being "By the dead dog."

674 789 **Theft.** Cattle lifting is the most common form of serious theft. Men seek to steal cattle from members of the same tribe living at a distance from their own district, because the animals stolen can thus be more easily secreted. A man who intends to rob a kraal first visits the place with his son in order to work magic and to make his preparations. He takes with him a number of sticks pointed and prepared for the magic, and indicates certain spots to his son, who drives a stick into the ground at each place. These are magical sticks which cast a spell upon owners of cattle. The magic is followed up at night by the man's going to the kraal, opening the gate and driving away the cattle while the people are sleeping. Should the animals make any noise or prove stubborn and refuse to leave the kraal, it is a sign that the owners have received some intimation of the intended theft and have taken precautions to make more potent magic to frustrate the robbery. Under [685] such circumstances the cattle-lifter beats a hasty retreat before he is discovered and captured, as he knows that he will receive no quarter, but will certainly be put to death.

Chiefs possessing large herds of cattle take the precaution to keep a supply of powerful medicine over the gateway leading into the kraal, and also place it in various parts of the kraal so that, when a thief enters the kraal, he loses his strength, is unable to walk and so is captured and put to 554 death. A successful cattle-lifter soon becomes a noted man

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
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776 782 flesh is cooked and eaten near by, though sometimes the meat is taken a little distance away and is not eaten under the shadow of the tree.

789 791 **Rain-making.** Rain-making is an important ceremony, but it is performed by a Musoga priest who lives among the people for the purpose of assisting them in discharging those religious obligations which they consider necessary yet do not themselves understand how to perform. The man is treated with great respect and has a comfortable existence among them.

Relationships.

601 **Terms of relationship.** The following terms of relationship were supplied by the Rev. J. J. Willis, now Bishop of Uganda, formerly a C.M.S. Missionary at Maseno, Kavirondo, who says that the pronominal forms for Father and Mother are used, that is, each person says "My father" or "My mother" (m.s. = man speaks, w.s. = woman speaks).

Father, won, wora
Mother, min, mama
Eldest brother (m.s.), kayo, ng'amodwong'ena
Eldest sister (w.s.), nyamin madwong', nyamera madwong'
Sister (m.s.), Nyamin, Nyamera.
Father's brother, omin won, omin worwa
Father's brother's wife, min, minwa mama
Father's brother's child, owat, owadwa
Father's sister, wa, waya
Father's sister's husband, chwor wa, chwor waya
Father's sister's child (boy), wod wa, wod waya
Father's sister's child (girl), nyar wa, nyar waya
Mother's brother, ner, nera
Mother's brother's wife, chi ner, chi nera
Mother's brother's child (boy), woda ner, woda nera
Mother's brother's child (girl), min, mama
Mother's sister, min, mama
Mother's sister's husband, won, wonwa
Mother's sister's child (boy), owat mar nyina hao, owadwa mar nyina hao

16: Northcote G-5 (no date) 1907 FL11 Luo FL11

754 The evil eye, it is claimed, can make a sound man sick, and kill a man who is
755 ill, or an unborn child. Most diseases are attributed to the evil eye or to
757 malignant spirits, and so the best remedy is to make as much noise near the sick man as possible, in order to drive the evil ones away. In addition to this universal remedy, the Jaluo use a considerable variety of herbal medicines, and they are also expert at wet and dry cupping. Sometimes, however, the treatment is of a distinctly quack nature. Some time ago a native practitioner brought a case of assault against the husband of one of his patients. The defence set up was that the accused called in the prosecutor to treat his wife, and that the latter, after much cogitation, ordered the woman to climb to the roof of her hut and stay there till she was better. Unfortunately, the patient died under her open-air cure; her husband laid her death at the doctor's door and took steps to settle his account with the professor of healing arts, with a club. On another occasion the writer was summoned to an accident in the lime quarry in the district. One of the injured was suffering from a broken thigh and internal injuries. He put on a temporary splint, sent for the Indian apothecary, and gave orders that the patient
[752] was not to be moved in the "interim." Next day, however, the apothecary found, on arriving at the scene of the accident, that a Kavirondo surgeon had been called in; the latter was much puzzled by the complications of the case, and, in order to make a better diagnosis, cut the man open, with the not unnatural result that he died.

● 789 But, although the wizard is held in abhorrence and dread, the rain-maker is greatly esteemed: his success probably depends upon a knowledge of the signs of the heavens, but his methods are as follows: His village is to be found as a rule near a big tree, which he asserts is sacred; when rain is wanted he gathers some herbs and puts them in a large pot containing water, which he boils beneath the holy tree. Of the decoction thus prepared he draws off a little into a smaller pot, above which he squats on his haunches. Next a reed is produced, and through this the rain-maker draws up a little of the liquid and then squirts it forth into the air after blowing through the reed and causing the fluid in the pot to bubble; the whole process being punctuated by voluble mutterings and *abracadabra*. A reputation for uncanny powers, however, can be obtained even more easily than this, as the following anecdote will show. Some time ago, during the lesser rains, the natives of the valley in which the writer's station is situate, came and complained that a famous rain-maker was deflecting all the rain to the hills, so that the crops in the valley were dying. Would the Bwana (master) send a policeman and arrest the evil-doer? The Bwana did not see his way to such an arbitrary proceeding, but, being curious to see the wizard, scribbled a few crooked lines on a sheet of paper and told the applicants to show this to the rain-maker as a sign that the Bwana wished to speak with him. Next day they came back and said that the wizard had refused to come for the reason that the letter was not genuine but had emanated from an Indian shopkeeper; the writer told them to wait a few days, meaning to postpone the matter *sine die*. It so happened, however, that that evening a tremendous

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storm of rain broke over the valley, and next morning the complainants were back again to point out that his refusal to come in at the Bwana's summons had so frightened the rain-maker that he had sent rain next day, and to offer most hearty thanks for the white man's beneficent interference.

Though the Jaluo have good manners on the whole, some of their customs are decidedly the reverse of civilised. In common with the other Nilotic tribes of British East Africa, they draw blood from the living cattle and drink it. The custom, however, has its justification, for in many parts of Kavirondo this is the only method by which the natives can obtain salt. Also the older men are confirmed drunkards and hemp smokers, which causes them to age very quickly and probably shortens the average term of life.

Those who dwell on the shores of the great lake and of the larger rivers are expert fishermen: they catch fish with rod and line, a sunken trawl line, in weirs, by woven grass substitutes for nets, and by spearing them with four-pronged wooden spears which they throw with extraordinary accuracy. They are also keen huntsmen, though of little use out shooting, and possess highly trained dogs which will run down an oribi or hare or find a wounded guinea fowl knocked down by their throwing sticks.

In character they are naturally very honest, except with regard to cattle, a temptation which no East African can withstand. They are extremely jealous of any relations between their women and men of other tribes, nations or colour; but among themselves an unmarried woman who has reached the age of puberty may have as many friends, as they call them, as she likes, provided that they come from another clan; after marriage she must confine her attentions to her husband.

Perhaps their most pleasant trait is their love of fun and laughter: the feeblest joke or the slightest bit of horse-play will set them in roars of laughter. For hospitality and industry they have a well-earned name; they are, in fact, in every way most amenable when treated with a little kindness and consideration. They have a considerable knowledge of blacksmith's work, though the spears which they turn out cannot be compared with those of the Masai for fine work. With the latter tribe, however, they show a well-developed artistic sense, the designs on their shields being generally handsome and well carried out. They are also very fond of music—of a kind: they play upon an eight-stringed harp, which is mainly used to provide an accompaniment to their extempore songs, composed in the heroic or comic vein.

Speaking generally and comparatively they are a peaceful, non-aggressive folk, though the common impression that they are cowards is ridiculously wrong: in the writer's small experience of African tribes they have shown themselves better fighters than the much-landed Swahili, and better policemen than the dreaded Masai; they are certainly more amenable to discipline and less inclined to prefer their own wisdom to that of their officers.

On the other hand they are most painfully litigious: civil cases which arise in

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Behind and beyond are old beliefs that are still alive. A man can lay upon a piece of land, when he is dying, an oath that binds his heirs to hold on to it for ever, and will destroy anyone who sells it out of the family—an entail with the sanction of magic. And then old homesteads on the Kano plains sheltering behind euphorbia hedges contain the bones of the deceased owner, who is buried under the floor of his hut. So consolidation may ask the son to exchange not merely a field of maize, but the bones of his father, the terrestrial anchor of his father's spirit. No wonder it is often too much to ask, and that politicians find these deep fires easy to fan.

To reach Nyabondo we climbed a small escarpment, the beginning of the Kipsigis hills, left the car beside a track and walked to the farm of a young, pleasant-mannered school supervisor called James Onyango, one of the leaders of the enclosure movement. We sat under a tree near his new tin-roofed modern bungalow, above a shallow valley with a stream. The country here is gently rolling and thickly dotted with roofs of homesteads. Many people had gathered in a circle; the women sat together in bright cottons and gay head-scarves, plump and glossy, most of them with grave-faced, round-eyed babies sleeping in their arms or crawling about the grass beside them. This question of land touches the women at the core. James Onyango told his story in English.

"The idea of exchanging gardens came to us two years ago; we had heard of it in other places; most of us were interested, and asked the Government to advise. We held a meeting and agreed unanimously to consolidate, all of us within the Kadianga clan, fifty-nine families. In our clan are three sub-clans; each appointed three men to form a committee. Each of these three was a *n'gura*—an elder whose task is to look after the land, and one of these was made the president.

"We started to exchange our gardens, and at first everything was fair. Then came elections for the Legislative Council and the District Council. The candidates thought they would gain popularity by speaking against the land schemes. They campaigned among the people, and some listened. They had clever ways. In each sub-location they had an agent who